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SIPDIS

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TAGS: PTER PGOV PREL KISL KCRM PK UZ GM

SUBJECT: U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL IN GERMANY WERE PRIME TARGETS, IJU TERRORIST LEADER CONFESSES

REF: A. A) DUSSELDORF 10

1B. B) BERLIN 696

DUSSELDORF 00000030 001.2 OF 003

11. (U) Summary: The leader of the "Islamic Jihad Union" (IJU) Sauerland cell, Fritz Gelowicz (29), made a full confession in the ongoing terrorist trial at the Duesseldorf Higher Regional Court (reftels) on August 10, confirming that U.S. military personnel in Germany were the primary target for the group's planned terrorist attacks in 2007. Other prospective targets included U.S. Consulates in Germany, the Uzbek Embassy in Berlin, and parking garages at German airports as a "warning signal" to the German public and parliament to end the German military involvement in Afghanistan. Presiding Judge Ottmar Breidling was impressed with the comprehensiveness and openness of the group's confessions (which are ongoing), indicating that their actions would shorten the trial and could mitigate their sentences. A verdict is expected by early next year. End summary.

Full Confessions Impress Court

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12. (U) After an eight-week hiatus, during which the defendants were questioned separately and individually by the German Federal Office of Criminal Investigation (BKA) to verify their confessions, the sixth criminal division of the Dusseldorf Higher Regional Court under Presiding Judge Breidling resumed its hearings in this case on August 10 (a Consulate representative was present at the court hearing). Referring to the 1200-plus pages of testimony that resulted from the BKA questioning, Breidling, Germany's leading judge in terrorist cases, said he was "impressed by the comprehensiveness and openness" of the unprecedented confessions. Breidling confirmed the confessions would shorten the trial, but above all would provide a chance for "unveiling in great detail the true facts and background" of Islamic terrorist tendencies in Germany. Mentioning section 46 of the German criminal code, he also indicated that a confession at this stage in the trial could

result in more lenient sentences for the defendants.

A Joint Decision to Participate in the Jihad

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**¶3.** (U) For more than four hours, Gelowicz, flanked by his defense lawyers, gave a detailed account of how he and his co-defendants developed the idea of participating in the Jihad, went through terrorist training in Pakistan, and ended up preparing terrorist attacks in Germany before they were arrested by German police in the Sauerland region of North Rhine-Westphalia in September 2007. The idea was born in January 2005 when Gelowicz, a convert to Islam, and his friend Attila Selek, a Turkish-German dual national and a member of the fundamentalist Milli Goerues group, were in Mecca for the Hajj. In Mecca, they met with Adem Yilmaz, a Turkish national living near Frankfurt, and found they had similar plans to join the Jihad by taking up arms against the infidels. The fourth member of the cell, Daniel Schneider, also a convert to Islam, joined the group later.

**¶4.** (U) After returning to Germany from Mecca and Medina, they stayed in close contact, looking for possibilities to enter Iraq to fight against U.S. forces. This turned out to be difficult, and in August 2005 they went to Syria to learn Arabic, while they continued their ultimately futile attempts to enter Iraq. After trying unsuccessfully to join fighting in Chechnya, they went to Waziristan, Pakistan, via Turkey and Iran in January 2006 with the goal of being trained by the Mujahideen and later

DUSSELDORF 00000030 002.2 OF 003

joining the Jihad either in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Oath of Allegiance to the IJU

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**¶5.** (U) During their 5-month terrorist training in Waziristan the group got in contact with the IJU, which convinced them that it would be more practical and would also receive more public attention if the group were to attack the "head of the snake" (i.e. the U.S.) in Europe, in particular Germany, instead of in the Middle East. Before the group returned to Germany in the summer of 2006, they swore an oath of allegiance to the IJU leadership that committed them to carry out terrorist attacks in Germany under the IJU's authority, while Gelowicz was designated as operations leader for Germany. During the first eight months of 2007, the group was engaged in getting the material together for building the bombs, only interrupted by a police search of their apartments in February 2007, which, however, did not lead the police to the garage where Gelowicz had started to store hydrogen peroxide for the bomb construction. A mosque in Mannheim was repeatedly used as a meeting place to organize the illegal procurement of detonators via Turkey.

U.S. Military Personnel as Primary Targets

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**¶6.** (U) Gelowicz confirmed that the primary target for the planned terrorist attacks by the group were U.S. military

personnel stationed in Germany. "We wanted to kill as many as possible, not just one or two," Gelowicz confessed. The method to be used was to plant bombs in discos and pubs frequented by U.S. soldiers. Asked by Breidling if the group was prepared to also accept the loss of civilian lives, Gelowicz answered in the affirmative, qualifying it as "collateral damage" in a military operation. The second most important targets were what Gelowicz called "U.S. targets in Germany with a political significance, such as consulates." He explicitly mentioned that no attack was planned on the U.S. Embassy in Berlin as it was considered by the group as well protected and thus not vulnerable. Thirdly, a "symbolic attack" (i.e. with a smaller explosive device causing only material damage) was planned on the Uzbek Embassy in Berlin (as the IJU originated in Uzbekistan), Gelowicz said. Finally, parking garages at German airports were also chosen as targets with the intention of interrupting air service in Germany for at least a day. These bomb attacks at German airports were to be meant as a "warning signal" to the German public and parliament to end the German military involvement in Afghanistan, Gelowicz said. He had already searched the internet to find out when the next Bundestag vote on the continuation of the Afghanistan mission was scheduled so the bombs would go off the night before.

Comment

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¶7. (SBU) As Judge Breidling pointed out, a confession like Gelowicz's has never been heard in a German court room during a terrorist trial. It provides deep insights into the thinking, motives and training methods of Islamic terrorists. In a distanced, sober tone Gelowicz described in great detail how daily prayers, the study of the Koran, and learning the techniques for mass murder were all part of the same daily routine at an Islamist training camp in Pakistan, or how a place

DUSSELDORF 00000030 003.2 OF 003

of worship, a mosque in Germany, was used as a hidden meeting place for a terrorist plot. Although Gelowicz, when asked by Breidling, if he regretted his actions responded that "in retrospective I would not do it again" (to preserve chances for a more lenient sentence), he also left no doubt that he does not regret anything, and that he holds firm to his fundamentalist convictions, saying that all his actions were and will continue to be guided by the overriding goal of "alleviating the sufferings of Muslims" afflicted upon them by western culture.  
End comment.

¶8. (U) This message was coordinated with Embassy Berlin.  
GROSSMAN